

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD-ROM Database Users Guide

About the Database:

This CD-ROM contains the records of over 27,000 slave trade voyages between the years 1527 to 1866. Professors David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein at the W.E.B. DUBOIS INSTITUTE at Harvard University compiled the database.

This user's guide details the query and display software designed to interact with the database. Users who wish to access the raw data (available in SPSS format) should contact a member of the Geostat Center staff for assistance in accessing the original CD-ROM. A hard-copy codebook is available for these SPSS files.

Running the database program

The Slave Trade CD is accessible from any workstation in the Geostat lab. To run the database program, open the "Databases" folder on the desktop of a workstation and click on the Slave Trade icon (the ship).

The Main Menu

Once the Slave Trade CD program loads, the main menu window will open, offering four choices of information to examine:

- 1) Query the Database
- 2) Learn about methodology
- 3) Codes
- 4) Learn more about the ships

The second and third options explore in detail the methods the authors of the database used to construct their work. These options may not be of much interest to the casual user but do offer useful documentation for anyone wishing to export the data on the database for further use. The section offering more information about ships contains detailed histories of three ships used in trading slaves, including images of schematic drawings of their rigging and slave compartments. The text introducing this section provides good information on how typical these ships were for their time.

Navigating the Database

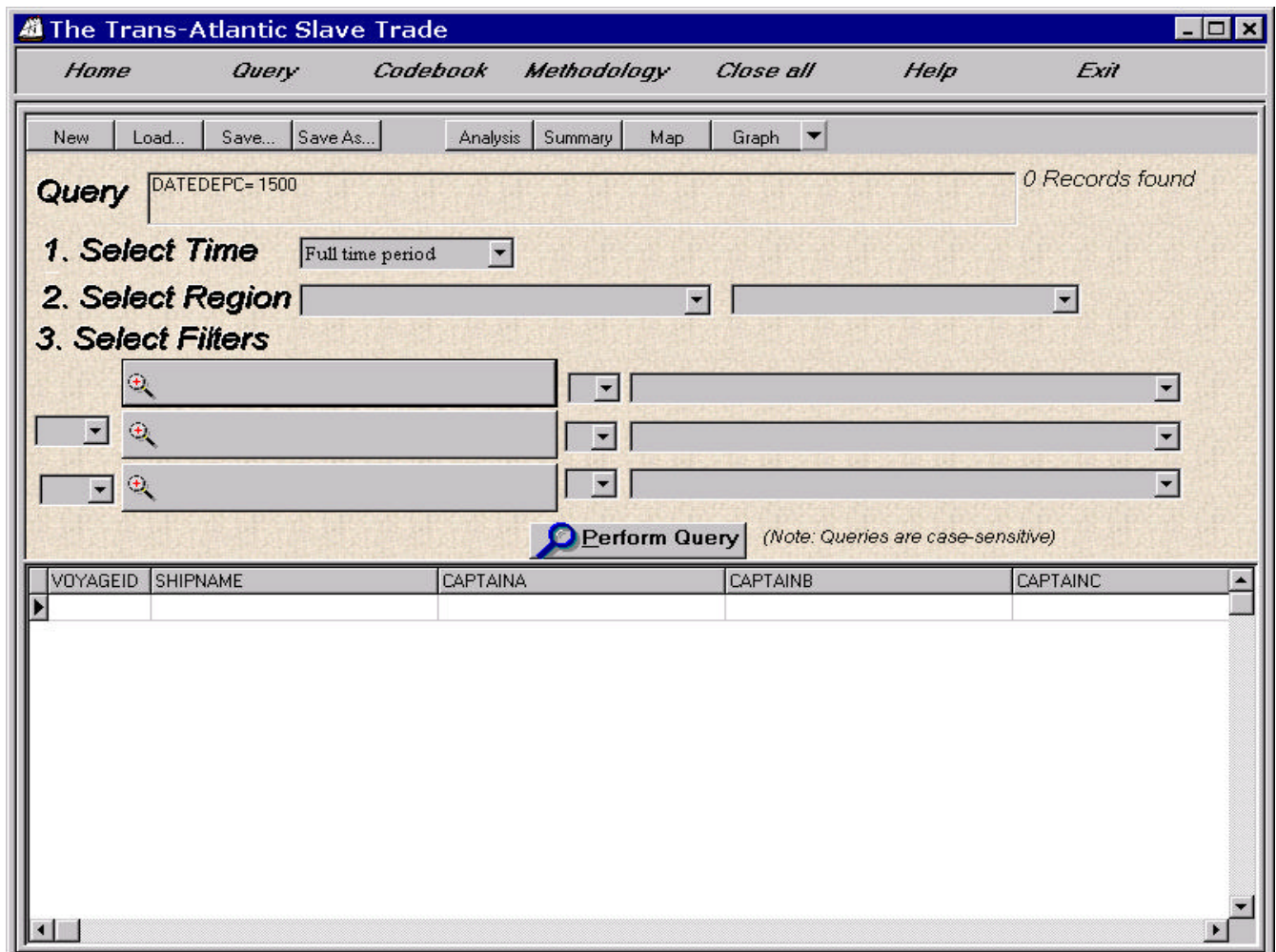
At all times, the database offers users two sets of buttons to navigate its different sections. The top row allows users to get back and forth between the four sections of the main menu:



- ❑ **HOME** – Allows the user to return to the main menu
- ❑ **QUERY** – Opens the search screen of the database
- ❑ **CODEBOOK** – Provides documentation on the variables used in the database
- ❑ **METHODOLOGY** – Details the creation and organization of the database


The Query Screen

When you choose to query the database, the following screen will appear:



VOYAGEID	SHIPNAME	CAPTAINA	CAPTAINB	CAPTAINC

Each record in the database represents a single slave trade voyage and is made up of the statistical, geographical and historical details for that voyage. Because of gaps in sources, not all records have data for all these variables. Keep this in mind when building queries, as your results may be limited by the presence or absence of some variables in records.

The query screen allows three ways to build a query of the slave trade database—by time period, region and filters determined by the user. The  button runs all queries. The results are displayed underneath the query builder in a table.

The Select Time function:

Users have four options to search in a given period of time: the full span of the database (1526-1866), and intervals of 5, 25, and 100 years. When a user selects to search a single period of time, another pull-down menu appears to the right, offering years in the designated segment of time to search. Querying the database by time selects *all* records of voyages for a given time period.


The Select Region function:

This search option allows users to select either the location or general area slaves either began or ended their journey. The first pull-down menu on the left allows five specific types of searches: two specific searches of slave embarkation and disembarkation, two more general searches of the same, and a search of where the voyage originated. This final option refers to the place where the slave ship left to pick up slaves and often points back to a European port. Searching for a specific port of origin for slave trade voyages is a good way to get a feel for a level of participation either a nation or specific city generated in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Once a user selects a type of search, he or she can select either the specific location or general area to search using the right-side pull-down menu.

There is an implied “AND” when using both the time and region searches, so that when both time and region are searched simultaneously only those records that meet both criteria will be returned. Therefore, it is possible to quickly narrow searches – to search all voyages beginning in the Netherlands between 1700 and 1801, for example.

The Filter functions:

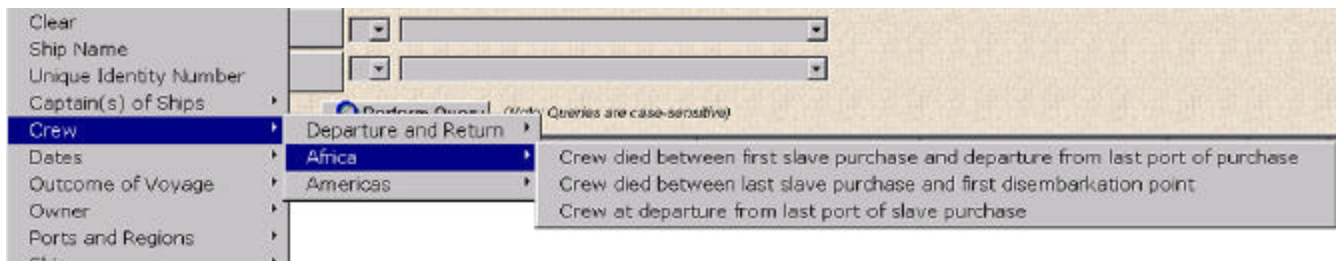
Query filters allow users to further refine a search by evaluating the database for specific types of information that relate to the ships, crews, destinations, or slaves themselves in trade voyages.

Clicking on the  bar will open a pull-down menu from which users can select a specific variable to use in refining a search.

The middle pull-down menu in the filter selectors section allows users to select between the three primary comparison operators (<, =, >). For all text variables like ship names, ID numbers, captains' names or countries, the = should be set by default. Use the < or > signs for numeric variables such as the numbers of crew members on board, number of slaves disembarked, or the length of the journey .

Filters with additional pull-down menus:


- **Captain(s) of Ships**: This function allows users to select either the first, second or third captain in charge of a voyage. Remember to select the “=” command in the middle pull-down menu.
- **Crew**: This function can be used not only to search slaving voyages with a specific number of crew members, but even to gather data on the physical conditions on board during both legs of the trans-Atlantic voyage.



Simply select a leg of the journey (either Africa or the Americas) to make such search options available.

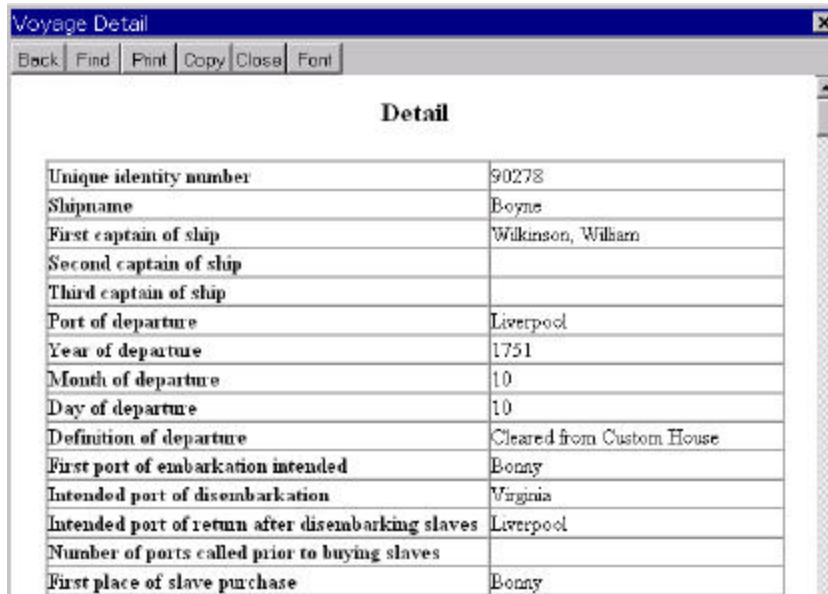
- **Dates**: If a user is interested in a specific date or time, the date filter can be used as a more precise tool than the Select Time function to search the database. Again, both the African and American legs of the slave trade can be searched according to date, as well as what years or dates slaves were bought or sold.
- **Outcome of Voyage**: This search option allows users to search the database for slave revolts en route and the fate of the voyage.
- **Ports and Regions**: Like the Dates filter, Ports and Regions can be used to generate more specific searches using ports along the slave trade. This filter can be applied to all legs of the slave trade and is therefore particularly useful in augmenting a region-based search to include ports in the middle passage. Since this filter can also be used to track ports of origin, it can also be used in tandem with a region-based search to track the nationality of ships and crews trading in various parts of the world.

- **Ship:** This search filter allows a user to set a wide variety of criteria about slaving vessels in performing a search, both about its registry and its configuration.
- **Slaves (all) and Slaves (by sex and age):** These filters allow a user to choose very specific search variables to the populations of slave ships like age, sex, and regional origin. Leaving this filter blank does not mean that slave data will be withheld in a search. Rather, this filter simply acts as a tool to highlight records with specific data present a user might be interested in. These filters also allow users to search both legs of slave trade voyages.
- **Sources:** This filter allows users to find material from a specific historical source easily. A list of sources can be found under the Methodology section of the database. You'll need to refer to this list to use the source filter.

Pressing the  button below the filter menus initiates your search of the database.

Query Output

Results are displayed in a table directly below the search screen, sorted by voyage ID (every voyage in the database has a unique ID number). Clicking on a particular voyage in the table will display the specifics of that particular voyage in the following window:



The screenshot shows a window titled "Voyage Detail" with a menu bar containing "Back", "Find", "Print", "Copy", "Close", and "Font". The main content area is titled "Detail" and contains a table with the following data:

Unique identity number	90278
Shipname	Boyne
First captain of ship	Wilkinson, Wilham
Second captain of ship	
Third captain of ship	
Port of departure	Liverpool
Year of departure	1751
Month of departure	10
Day of departure	10
Definition of departure	Cleared from Custom House
First port of embarkation intended	Bonny
Intended port of disembarkation	Virginia
Intended port of return after disembarking slaves	Liverpool
Number of ports called prior to buying slaves	
First place of slave purchase	Bonny

This window extends to provide a variety of information about the selected voyage.

Data about multiple voyages can be presented in a variety of ways by clicking on the tool bars above the query builder: **Analysis** **Summary** **Map** **Graph** ▼

Analysis: This button opens a general statistical report of the sums of the voyages selected.

Home Query Codebook Methodology Close all Help Exit				
Print Copy Summary Map Graph ▼				
Analysis				
100-year period = 1701-1800 and Where slaves disembarked = Georgia and (AND Imputed deaths of slaves during voyage>0)				
	Total	Voyage Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation
Slaves embarked	13,392	75	178.56	98.22
Slaves disembarked	11,685	75	155.80	85.09
Modified tonnage		49	143.94	79.43
Slave voyage mortality		16	12.20%	10.10%
Length of middle passage (days)		5	69.80	3.25
Share of males		3	70.30%	6.41%
Share of children		1	42.60%	0.00%

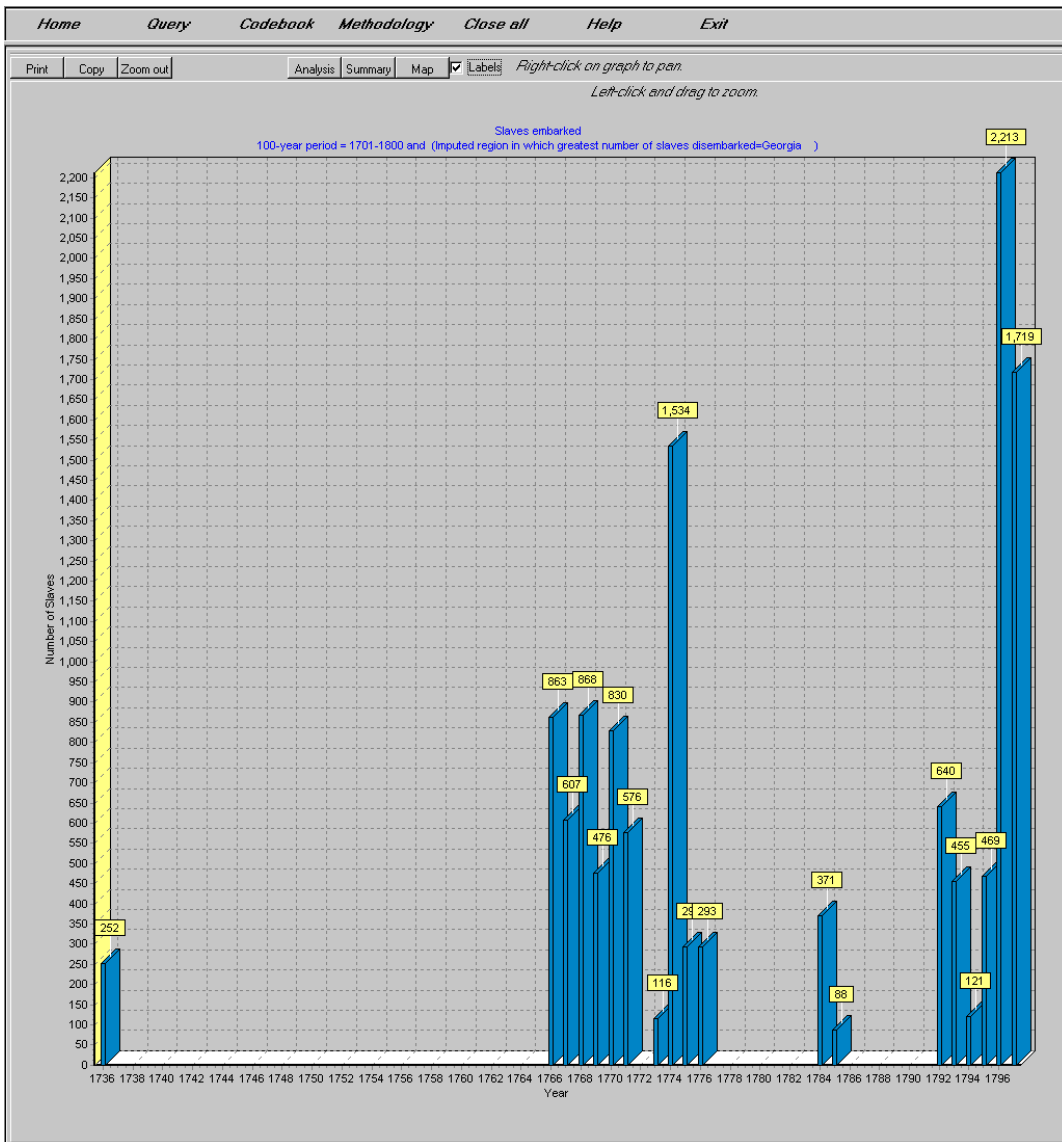
Summary: This button creates a table based on embarkation and disembarkation points for the retrieved searched set of voyage records.

Home Query Codebook Methodology Close all Help Exit			
Print Copy Analysis Map Graph ▼			
Summary			
100-year period = 1701-1800 and Where slaves disembarked = Georgia and (AND Imputed deaths of slaves during voyage>0)			
Slaves embarked: 13,392			
Region	Number	Percent of Total	Percent less Unspecified
Africa unspecified	3,594	26.80%	---
Sierra Leone	2,751	20.50%	28.10%
Senegambia	2,513	18.80%	25.60%
Gold Coast	1,606	12.00%	16.40%
Windward Coast	1,568	11.70%	16.00%
West-central Africa	1,360	10.20%	13.90%
Slaves disembarked: 11,685			
Region	Number	Percent of Total	Percent less Unspecified
Georgia	11,685	100.00%	100.00%

Map: This function is available, but the quality of the map created is fairly low. You can pan across a map by right-clicking, and dragging over to the area of interest.

Graph: The program can also generate graphs based on trade across time for a trade route, specific ship, set of ships from one port, or a variety of other variables selected through the filters.

An example of a graph generated by the program:



By holding the left mouse button and drawing a box, a user can zoom in to a particular area of a graph. Holding the right mouse button down allows a user to pan through a graph by moving the mouse.

Output can be printed out by using the print button found on all windows. The Analysis, Summary, Graph and Map screens can also be copied and pasted into other programs. Copying the Analysis and Summary screens produces a text file, while Graphs and Maps are saved as images in bitmap (.bmp) format. Right click the mouse to bring up the copy command. Users can also use the copy and paste command to select search terms and paste them into the query builder for sake of accuracy in a new search.

Saving and Loading Searches



If you have performed a search and think you may need to repeat it at a future date, perhaps with additional search parameters, you can save your search and retrieve it later.

Please note – you will need to use the same machine on which you saved a search if you wish to retrieve it.

The Save/Load menu bar provides these tools:

- ❑ **New** – Clears the query screen.
- ❑ **Load** – Retrieves a saved search.
- ❑ **Save** – Saves the current search. Please name your search with your email id.
- ❑ **Save As** – Allows you to rename a saved search.

A Sample Search:

The following sets of queries will provide examples of the types of searches a researcher can perform with the slave trade query builder.

1: Find all voyages in which slaves disembarked in Virginia

To execute this search, first open the query builder from the main menu. Then select “Where slaves disembarked” from the pull-down menu labeled “Select Region.” In the pull-down menu to the immediate right, scroll down and click on “Virginia.”

The screenshot shows a software interface with a menu bar (Home, Query, Codebook, Methodology, Close all, Help, Exit) and a toolbar (New, Load..., Save..., Save As..., Analysis, Summary, Map, Graph). The main area is titled "Query" and shows "27233 Records found". It contains three sections: "1. Select Time" with a dropdown set to "Full time period"; "2. Select Region" with a dropdown set to "Where slaves disembarked" and a second dropdown set to "Virginia"; and "3. Select Filters" with three empty filter rows. A "Perform Query" button is at the bottom of the form area, with a note "(Note: Queries are case-sensitive)". Below the form is a table with the following data:

VOYAGEID	SHIPNAME	CAPTAINA	CAPTAINB	CAPTAINC
1	Pastora de Lima			
2	Tebaio			
3	Paquete Real			
4	Bom Caminho			
5	Benigretta			
6	Avoader			
7	Formiga			
8	Vigilante			

435 Records will appear- probably too many records to be useful in historical research, especially since they cover a 120-year time span. Perhaps limiting this search to a specific time period of interest will yield more useful results.

2: Find voyages disembarking in Virginia from 1751-1775

Say you're interested only in the 25 years preceding the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. To limit the previous search of all voyages disembarking in Virginia, use the “Select Time” query option. In that pull-down menu, select “25-year period.” A second pull-down menu will appear, and in it select “1751-1775.”

This time, 113 records were returned, all that disembarked in Virginia between 1751 and 1775.

The screenshot shows a software interface with a menu bar (Home, Query, Codebook, Methodology, Close all, Help, Exit) and a toolbar (New, Load..., Save..., Save As..., Analysis, Summary, Map, Graph). The main area contains a query input field with the text "year25 = 10 .AND.MJSELIMP = 10" and a status indicator "113 Records found". Below the query are three sections: "1. Select Time" with a dropdown for "25-year period" and a date range "1751-1775"; "2. Select Region" with a dropdown for "Where slaves disembarked" and a region selection "Virginia"; and "3. Select Filters" with three empty filter rows. A "Perform Query" button is present with a note "(Note: Queries are case-sensitive)". At the bottom, a table displays the following data:

VOYAGEID	SHIPNAME	CAPTAINA	CAPTAINB	CAPTAINC
17276	Tryal	Saunders, Abraham		
17277	Williamsburgh	Tate, John	Sword, James	
17278	Africa	Miller, Alexander		
17279	Ann Gally	Robe, Alexander		
17280	Black Prince	Miller, William		
17287	Greyhound	Davies, John		
17288	Hampton	Skinner, John	Whiltshire, Edward	
17293	Levant	McMurdo, James		

But let's say you were interested in only English traffic into Virginia at this time period; specifically the role of the port of Liverpool played in the slave trade. You need to use a filter to see that information.

3: Find ships out of Liverpool making journeys into Virginia from 1751-1775.

To select a port of origin, click on to display your search options. From the menu, select:

The screenshot shows a search menu with the following structure:

- Owner
 - Alexander
- Ports and Regions (highlighted)
 - Departure (highlighted)
 - Port of departure
 - Region of departure
 - Imputed region of departure
- Ship
 - Africa
- Slaves (all)
 - Americas
- Slaves (by sex and age)
 - Return

After selecting the "port of departure" filter, click on the pull-down menu to the right and select "Liverpool" from the list. The middle scroll-down menu should automatically read "=".

Home Query Codebook Methodology Close all Help Exit

New Load... Save... Save As... Analysis Summary Map Graph

Query year25 = 10 .AND.MJSELIMP = 10 .AND. (PORTDEP= 46) 48 Records found

1. Select Time 25-year period 1751-1775

2. Select Region Where slaves disembarked Virginia

3. Select Filters

Port of departure = Liverpool

Perform Query (Note: Queries are case-sensitive)

VOYAGEID	SHIPNAME	CAPTAINA	CAPTAINB	CAPTAINC
25212	Potomack Merchant	Gibson	Hartley, Richard	
90166	Lintot	Lowe, Ralph		
90187	Cumberland	Griffin, John		
90188	Cumberland	Allen, Patrick		
90278	Boyne	Wilkinson, William		
90297	Orrell	Lacer, Samuel	Whitesides, John	Griffin, James
90304	Minerva	Jordan, Thomas		
90338	Marques of Rockingham	Evans		

After performing the query, 48 records should be displayed of ships from Liverpool that disembarked slaves in Virginia during this time period, a good sample size for this level of search detail. But let's say that after examining your sources, you are interested in the voyages financed at this time by Samuel Shaw. You can further pare down the records to examine only his business in the slave trade with Liverpool ships.

4: Find a specific person involved in the slave trade.

To add another filter to the query, first be sure to select the "AND" option from the pull-down menu to the left of the second filter box:

Click on the second filter box and select:

Outcome of Voyage	▶	
Owner	▶	First owner of venture
Ports and Regions	▶	Second owner of venture
Ship	▶	Third owner of venture
Slaves (all)	▶	Fourth owner of venture

In the right box, type "Shaw, Samuel." Be sure to capitalize the first and last names because the search is case-sensitive. Since you are only interested in the voyages you have already identified, do not click the Search All box.

Four records involving Samuel Shaw should appear. It seems he financed Liverpool slave ships passing through Virginia in 1752, 1760, 1761 and 1762.

Query year25 = 10 .AND. MJSELIMP = 10 .AND. (PORTDEP= 46 .AND. OWNERS= "Shaw," 4 Records found

1. Select Time 25-year period 1751-1775

2. Select Region Where slaves disembarked Virginia

3. Select Filters

Port of departure = Liverpool

AND First owner of venture = Shaw, Samuel Search All

Perform Query (Note: Queries are case-sensitive)

VOYAGEID	SHIPNAME	CAPTAINA	CAPTAINB	CAPTAINC
90413	Elizabeth	Hayes, William		
90670	Mary	Kelly, John	Cottyman, Thomas	
90920	Nanny	McDougal, James		
90921	Nanny	McDougal, James		

You can gather statistics about these purchases by using the “Summary,” “Analysis” and “Graph” commands at the top of the query screen.

This quick tour highlights the main features of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD.